

The average UNC graduate takes longer than the equivalent of four years to complete a degree. Data provided by The University of North Carolina, summarized in Figure 2, show that students receiving a bachelor's degree from four-year programs take on average between 9 and 10 registered semesters to graduate, or the equivalent of 4.5 to 5 years of coursework. Systemwide, this average time-to-degree has remained stable in recent years.

**Figure 2. Average\* Semesters-to-Degree, Graduation Years 2006-07 Through 2011-12**

	Fall & Spring Terms	Summer Terms	Total Semesters
<b>2006-07</b>	8.14	1.58	9.72
<b>2007-08</b>	8.10	1.56	9.66
<b>2008-09</b>	8.13	1.53	9.66
<b>2009-10</b>	8.09	1.55	9.64
<b>2010-11</b>	8.10	1.56	9.66
<b>2011-12</b>	8.04	1.55	9.59

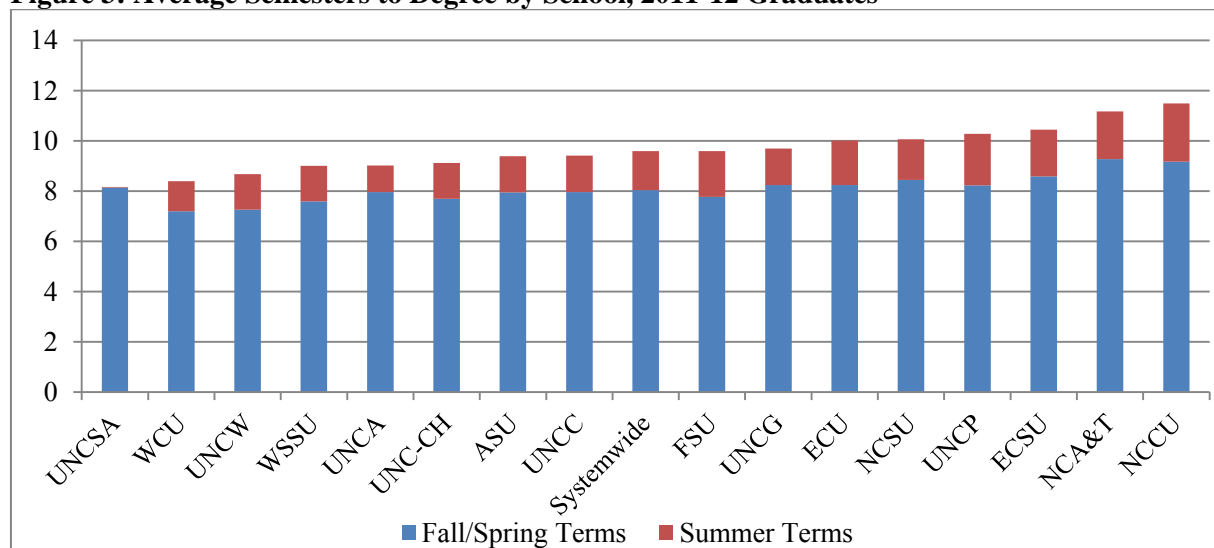
\* Data for individual campuses is shown in Appendix D.

Source: The University of North Carolina General Administration, October 2012

The UNC systemwide data show that, on average, students spend slightly over eight semesters in registered in regular term (fall and spring) semesters, plus an additional semester and a half in summer term. Consequently, if the surcharge increase from 25% to 50% changes student behavior, it may do so by causing more students to register for additional coursework in the summer term, which is not subject to the surcharge, rather than by reducing the overall time-to-degree.

The time-to-degree at each campus varies, as shown in Figure 3. For example, at NCCU, which had the longest time-to-degree for 2011-12 graduates, the average graduate took more than 11.5 semesters to complete a degree, with more than 9 regular-term semesters and more than 2 summer terms. Conversely, UNC School of the Arts, Western Carolina University, and UNC-Wilmington all have average time to degrees less than 9 semesters, including summer term. The surcharge increase from 25% to 50% is more likely to reduce the total time-to-degree at schools where the time-to-degree is higher.

**Figure 3: Average Semesters to Degree by School, 2011-12 Graduates**



However, other factors affect the amount of time that students spend in school, and any future decreases in systemwide or campus-specific time-to-degree may not be attributable solely to tuition surcharge rate increase. For example, limits on the length of time a student can receive financial aid may impact time-to-degree. S.L. 2011-145, Sec. 9.11, created a maximum length of time during which UNC students may receive assistance from the UNC